



Funding Opportunity Bulletin

The purpose of this bulletin is to alert National Park Service (NPS) units of the opportunity to partner for project funding opportunities with State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

Under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), enacted in July 2012, Congress restructured the former “Transportation Enhancement” activities by eliminating selected eligible activities and combining programs such as the Recreational Trails Program and Safe Routes to School Program. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides Transportation Alternatives Program ([TAP](#)) funding to States and MPOs by statutory formula. Federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service, are eligible participants for TAP funding (23 U.S.C. 213(c)(4)(B)). Project examples include pedestrian and bicycle and other nonmotorized trail facilities, preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities, vegetation management practices along transportation rights-of-way, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater management and wildlife.



C&O Canal Towpath, historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities (Credit: Tracy Hadden Loh, NTAC)

Getting Started with a TAP Project

1. [Review](#) State and MPO policies and coordinator contact information.
2. Review competitive selection criteria and required application materials. Note that projects:
 - a. Must relate to surface transportation (or recreational trails).
 - b. Must fit in one or more of the eligible project categories.
 - c. Must be sponsored by “eligible entities”, which may include NPS park units and local governments, but generally not nonprofit organizations.
 - d. Must be selected through a competitive process.
 - e. Must be treated as highway projects, regardless of location (except for projects funded under the Recreational Trails Program set-aside).
3. Prepare project scope and cost estimates with consideration of environmental and right-of-way issues.
4. Demonstrate support for your project by securing local matching funds, endorsements, or by hosting public meetings.
5. Consider using [Youth Service and Conservation Corps](#).
6. Submit all application materials, making sure to clearly demonstrate the project’s relation to surface transportation and the eligible activities.
7. Review FHWA’s [Federal-aid Essentials](#) for a better understanding of what is expected of project sponsors.

Program Funding

TAP funds are administered by the DOT in your state. The total available funding nationally is \$1.6B, FY 2013 (\$809M) and FY 2014 (\$820M). The funds are [suballocated](#): Fifty (50) percent of a state’s TAP apportionment is suballocated by population to: (1) MPOs with urbanized area populations greater than 200,000, (2) urban areas with 5,000 to 200,000 urban population, and (3) areas with populations less than 5,000. The remaining 50 percent is available for use in any area of the state, regardless of population. MPOs with urbanized area populations greater than 200,000 are responsible for project selection for funds suballocated to them in consultation with the state. Title 23 U.S.C. 120 (j) and (k) allows the NPS and state to use Federal land management agency and Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) funds to match other Federal-aid highway program funds.

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TAP projects are generally reimbursable at 80 percent, with the remaining 20 percent provided by the project sponsor (subject to a [sliding scale](#) that allows for a higher Federal share in most western states). Funding for each state varies, as well as state specific rules for the competitive selection process. More information can be obtained from your state program manager.

Project Eligibility

[Eligible activities](#) include most activities historically funded as Transportation Enhancements, the Recreational Trails Program, and the Safe Routes to School program. The TAP may benefit the park units by providing funding for a broad range of projects including:

- Construction, planning, and design of on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation.
- Construction, planning, and design of infrastructure-related projects and systems that will provide safe routes for non-drivers.
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
- Community improvement activities, which include but are not limited to:
 - o inventory, control, or removal of outdoor advertising;
 - o historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities;
 - o vegetation management practices in transportation rights-of-way to improve roadway safety, prevent against invasive species, and provide erosion control; and
 - o archaeological activities relating to impacts from implementation of a transportation project eligible under title 23.
- Any environmental mitigation activity related to stormwater management due to highway runoff, reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality, or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.
- The Recreational Trails Program (both as a set-aside from TAP, and generally eligible for TAP).
- Safe Routes to School projects.
- Boulevards from divided highways.

Note that any project eligible under TAP also is eligible under the [Surface Transportation Program](#).



Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge (FWS), construction of off-road trail facilities for pedestrians (Credit: USFWS)

Important Dates

Every State will administer the program differently. Please contact your [state program manager](#) to confirm TAP Application deadlines and requirements. For the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) (if a state does not opt out), all RTP provisions and requirements remain in effect; contact the [State Trail Administrator](#).

Sources

[FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program](#)

[FHWA Transportation Alternatives Final Guidance](#)

[FHWA Transportation Alternatives Fact Sheet](#)

[FHWA Transportation Alternatives Questions and Answers](#)

[NPS Transportation Alternatives Bulletin and Appendix](#)

[Transportation Enhancement Activities \(for remaining TE funds\)](#)

[National Transportation Alternatives Clearinghouse \(NTAC\)](#)

[Professional TAP Contacts \(FHWA, State DOT\)](#)

[State Trail Administrators \(usually in a State resource agency\)](#)

[NPS Regional Transportation Program Coordinators](#)

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